

70

THE  
VANITY  
OF  
Human Respects.  
IN A  
SERMON.

By WILLIAM DAREL. *Jo. Smith*

ISA. LI. Vers. 7.

*Fear not the Reproach of Men, neither be  
afraid of their Revilings.*

Published with Allowance.

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Tottenham, in London-House-Court  
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1688.

YAMBY  
TO  
Human Rights  
IN A  
SERMON

By WILLIAM DAVIS  
Pastor of the Baptist Church,  
of the City of New York  
Delivered on the 11th of May, 1838.

LONDON:  
Printed for John Taylor, in London-House Court,  
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1838.

THE  
**VANITY**  
 OF  
**Human Respects.**  
 IN A  
**SERMON**  
 ON LUKE II. Vers. 49.

*Did you not know, that I must be about my  
 Father's Business?*

**G**OD was not content to give us *One Pledge*  
 of His *Kindness*, by assuming our *Nature*;  
 but would add a *Second*, by espousing our  
*Miseries*: Those *Showres of Tears*, with which He  
 first saluted the *World* at His *Nativity*, were scarce  
 dried up, when He permitted the Lance to open a  
 Way to *Streams of Blood*; that we might read His  
 B *Kindness*

## The Vanity of Human Respects.

*Kindness* in as many *Characters*, as He poured out Drops; and that our *Eyes* might be *Spectators*, as well as our *Ears* *Witnesses*, of His *Affection*. But, as our *Sins* cry'd out aloud for a *Saviour*; so did our *Blindness* plead as earnestly for a *Leader*: *★ Redeemer's* Death, indeed, could make us cease to be *Bad*; His *Life* was requisite, to point us out a *Method* to be *Good*: And therefore, He was pleas'd to leave us His own *Life*, as a *Model* to frame ours by; and to buy the *Glory* of His *Body* with the *Price* of those *Vertues*, with which we must purchase the *Happiness* of our *Souls*. He taught us *Poverty* at his *Nativity*, bereaving Himself of all Things; though He created All: He preach'd us *Obedience* at his *Circumcision*; and *Patience* at his *Death*: But, in this *Day's Gospel*, He gives us a *Document* as necessary to be learnt, as it is hard to be put in execution; viz. *Nesciebatis in his quæ Patris mei sunt oportet me esse?*

“Do you not know, that my *Affection* to you must  
 “give place to that *Love* I bear my *Father*? That  
 “all the *Ties* of *Flesh* and *Blood* are too weak,  
 “to restrain me from my *Duty*? Dear *Christians*!  
 Hear this *Great Preacher*; and persuade your selves,  
 that it was not so much a *Desire* of satisfying his  
*Parents*, which open'd his *Sacred Mouth*, as of instru-  
 cting you in a *Point*, that perchance you all know,  
 though



## The Vanity of Human Respects.

3

though (I fear) few practise. Alas! we live in so *Complementing* an *Age*, that One false Step in regard of a *Companion*, carries us into greater *Convulsions*, than a Thousand *Treasons* against *GOD*. We lead *Lives* at Random, as if we could be Sav'd by *Proxy*; or, as if the Fear of offending a *Debauch'd Friend*, were a just Reason to offend *GOD*. In fine, Our Judgments are so deprav'd by *Heathenish Principles*, enacted by *Christians*, that most Men (Alas!) choose rather to be really *Bad*, than to be thought *Good*: A strange Frenzy (I confess,) and a most Courageous Cowardize, to stand the Stroke of a *Thunder-bolt*, and to tremble at the Touch of a *Tongue*, which takes its Point from our own *Imagination*! Give me Leave this Day to arraign **human Respects** from this *Pulpit*, which *Jesus Christ* condemn'd in the *Temple*: Be not angry, if, whilst I accuse this *Vice*, I fall not in It my self, out of a Fear of displeasing *Those* whom I cannot *please*, without betraying my *Character*, and their *Salvation*.

I will draw my **Discourse** into *Two Heads*; viz: *First*, I will discover the *Intrigues* of the **Unlucky**, to with-draw their *Fellow-Creatures* from the very Root of *Godliness*, the **True Faith**. And then I will arm These with *Weapons* capable to over-come the

## *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

strongest **Human Respects**; which have always been the most fatal *Obstacles* the *Devil* can put in their way, who seek the *Truth*. Secondly, I will address my *Discourse* to **Those**, who, in spite of all Opposition, have embrac'd the **True Faith of Christ**; and will lay before them such *Motives*, as shall be able to perswade any Man of Reason, into a *Resolution* of bearing up close to the *Duties* of his *Religion*; without which *Compliance*, **Faith** is but a sounding *Cymbal*, a specious *Name*, and an insignificant *Nothing*.

---

**T**IS a great Happiness to *Walk in the Way*, which leads us to *Eternal Felicity*; and an Unhappiness above Expression, to run (in this World) towards a *Misery* without Redress, because Endless. **Those** run the Fortune of the *First*, who embrace a **True Faith**; and **Those** the Misfortune of the *Second*, who hug a **False One**. So that we ought, in *Prudence*, to employ all our Care to be in the *Right*: And yet, (O *Heavens!*) our Study is to be in the *Wrong*; notwithstanding, as if our own *Reason* were too weak to work our *Ruin*, our *Companions* lend us an *Hand*; and We (poor *Creatures!*) lay hold of it, out of *Civility*, though the *Complement* cost us our own *Salvation*.

## The Vanity of Human Respects.

5

vation. 'Tis a stupendious Thing, to see what *Divines* this *Corrupted Age* (and I may add too, this *Corrupted City*) hath brought forth, and nourished; and also, how docile *Scholars* are, in learning those *Maxims* they should never hear of without Horror! Some teach raw *Youth*, That poor Men here below grope in the Dark; That Things beyond this *World* float on *Uncertainties*: And therefore, That those black *Stories* of *Heil*, those diverting *Fables* of *Heaven*, are only fit to take place among the *Romantick Tales* of a *Poetick Brain*: That the most *Sparky Wits* of *Antiquity*, could never discover the least Glimmering of any other *Divinity*, than *Fortune*: And, Why should We (blind *Batts*) pretend to discern a *Being*, those *Eagles* never espied? These *Blasphemies* (edg'd with *Wit*, and back'd with the *Authority* of Those, whom *Fools* have plac'd in the *Front* of the *Virtuosi*) are receiv'd by *Youth*, (which would fain find a *Veil* for the blackest *Crimes*) as *Oracles* dropt from *Heaven*.

This *Discourse* is follow'd by *Peals* of *Applauses*; every one cries, *The Gentleman hath Reason*; though, in reality, he hath no more, than to deceive his *Hearers*; nor *Those*, than to be deceiv'd. But, if some are not overcome by this *canting* and *modish* Piece of *Sophistry*,

## *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

then *He sits down in the Chair of the Scornèr*, as the *Psalmist* expresses it; and, for want of *Reason*, laughs his *Auditory* into his *Atheistical Belief*.

I must confess, *Railery* hath more augmented this *Impious Doctrine*, than any other Engin (either the *Craft of Satan*, or *Malice of his Emissaries*) ever set a running: For (though I can't tell how it comes to pass, yet) certain it is, That whosoever patiently bears a *Railery*, is judg'd defective in his *Intellectuats*: And such is the present Perswasion of *Mankind*, that it is a lesser Blemish to be esteem'd voyd of *Grace*, than *Wit*. And then the Fear of losing a Place in the *Academy of Wit*, or of being quite cut off from the *Conversation of Men of Parts*, frights poor *Creatures* into a Resolution of embracing a *Religion*, which hath no other *Articles*, than to deny *All*. But, because nothing but a Desire to Die as *Beasts*, can perswade Men thus to Live like *Them*; and that *Few* are so indulg'd to *Sense*, as quite to lose it: Therefore *Others*, better acquainted with the *Inclination of the Times*, will grant, that there is a *G O D*. But then they turn *Him* into a *Latitudinarian*; as if Any *Worship* satisfy'd Him, as well as That which He prescrib'd Himself. *G O D*, say they, with the Old *Pagan Maximus*, is too vast to enter Whole into *Man's Under-*



## The Vanity of Human Respects.

7

*Understanding*; He must be taken in Pieces; and some must be contented to worship One *Symbol*, and some Another, as they judge convenient: He is not so nice, as *Divines* make Him; 'Tis *Honour* He requires, without quarrelling at the *Manner*: And therefore, all *Religions* are good, if supported by *Veracity*. Thus do these *Men* extol every *Perswasion*, and are of *None* themselves. They erect a new *Pantheon*; yet adore no other *Divinity*, but their own rambling *Imagination*.

Now, that this fair *Discourse* vents foul *Falsities*, 'tis evident to All, who are not resolv'd to be deceiv'd: Whosoever hath cast but one Glance upon the *Scripture*, cannot but know, That as there is but One *GOD*, and One *Baptism*; so there is but One *True Faith*; and that he who will not acknowledge this *Church* to be his *Mother*, cannot have *GOD* for his *Father*.

Yet after all, this *Doctrine* is so varnisht over with the specious Colour of *Reason*, so sweetned with the bewitching Assurements of *Liberty*, that Many admire it, Some embrace it, and Others have not Courage enough to condemn it. They either imagine, that *Silence* speaks loud enough their Dislike of it, or it is

not



## *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

not their incumbent *Duty* to be so Zealous for *G O D's Honour*, as to expose their Own to the *Capricio* of *Men*; from whom they cannot expect any *Civility*, seeing their *Malice* is not aw'd by the *Majesty* of their *Maker*.

But, for *God's* sake, *D. C.* (and your own) do not let any **human Respects** tie your *Tongues*, when *Zeal* for your *Maker's Honour* commands you to speak. If *Impiety* dare appear bare-fac'd, give your *Piety* the same Freedom; and be not more fearful to defend your *Maker*, than his Enemies are to unthrone *Him*. Fly from them, as from Men struck with the *Plague*; and do not scruple to separate your selves from *Those*, who have separated themselves from *G O D*. But, if it be your Misfortune once to fall in so deprav'd a *Company*, (and *God* knows, 'tis an Accident may frequently happen in this Great *City*) run not into it a second Time: They are sick of a *Mortal Disease*; and nothing is more Natural, than to catch it. To hunt a *Sinner*, is the next Degree to be like him. *Cum perverso pervertèris*. Do not say, so monstrous a *Blasphemy* sounds too gratingly in the Ears of a *Christian*, ever to be heard without *Indignation*: Alas! Alas! *Sins* are but like Out-landish *Monsters*; which, at first, fright us; but, in Process  
of

## *The Vanity of Human Respects.* 9

of Time, delights us. Neither be inveigld by the specious Name of a **Friend**; for, How can you in Prudence put one Grain of Trust in a *Man*, who disavows all Fidelity to *GOD*; from Whom he can both *Hope* and *Fear* more, than from any *Creature* breathing:

But, I confess, few have so great a Respect for a **Companion**, as, for his sake, to unmake their very *Maker*; that is, To deny His *Being*, to whom they owe their *Own*. This servile *Deference* is only incident to *Those*, who have lost all *Conscience* by redoubled *Sins*: And then, seeking a *Remedy* worse than the very *Evil*, they perswade themselves, there is no *Hell* Below, to punish *Crimes*; no *GOD* Above, to recompense *Vertues*. Nor will they be perswaded out of this *Temerarious Tenet*, till *Experience* forces them to feel their Mistake.

**Human Respects** take their Range more ordinarily among *Those*, who profess a *Religion*, but dare not embrace the **True One**, although they know it: The *Devil* raises a thousand *Black Imaginations* in their Heads; and their own *Cowardize* as many more: And then these *Aery Fancies* (which take their Terror from *Apprehensions* alone) quash all Resolution,

## 10 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

folution, but to Profess openly the *Religion A-la-mode*; and Interiorly **That**, which they are convinc'd to be the *True One*.

But, let me tell You, *D. A.* This petty Piece of *Policy* will not do; This Jumbling and Blending of *Religions* together, makes but a *Babel of Confusion*; which GOD detests. *Jehu* was convinc'd of the Truth of the *Mosaick Religion*; but, to ingratiate himself with his *Ethnick Subjects*, he plac'd the *Calf* on the *Altar*: However this monstrous Mixture of *Devotion*, was no better than *Impiety*; and so the *Holy Ghost* hath publish'd to Posterity, That *He walked in the sinful Path of his Predecessor, Jeroboam*: Which is as harsh an *Epitaph*, as could be Ingraven on his *Tomb*.

Do not then deceive your selves, (*Dear Brethren!*) by imagining you comply with your *Obligation*, when you Erect a *Temple* to the *True Religion* in your *Heart*, and an *Altar* to a *False One* on your *Tongue*. *St. Paul* assures you, *Confessio autem fit ore ad Salutem*; That a Publick Confession of the *Truth*, is a necessary Requisite to *Salvation*.

But, Oh *Sir!* What will the World say, if I leave  
The

## The Vanity of Human Respects. 11

The Religion in which I was Born, to profess Another; which is the continual Subject of *Pulpit-Exercitation*, the common Theam of *Railery*, and the never-failing Topick of all *Invectives*:—I must confess, these *Bugbears* have frighted more than one Soul into *Hell*. But consult your own *Reason* a little, I beseech you; and then tell me, Whether such weak *Objections* ought to oversway your *Obligation*, or such childish *Sophistry* argue you into *Damnation*?

*First*, If it be your Misfortune to have been Born, and have spent the greatest Part of your days in a *False Religion*, the greater is your *Misery*; and therefore you cannot forsake that *Error* too soon, which hath deceiv'd you so long: Embrace rather a new-offer'd *Light*, and do not sleep in an old *Darkness*. Be not cruel to your selves, seeing it hath pleas'd *GOD* to shew you *Mercy*.

*Secondly*, I grant, Our Religion hath not only been aspersed by the open Professors of *Impiety*, but even by *Those* to whom a counterfeit *Zeal* gave a place among the *Virtuous*: But you must know, 'tis no Crime to be *Condemn'd*, but to be *Guilty*. Was our Blessed *LORD* a *Drunkard*, because the malicious *Scribes* and *Pharisees* term'd Him so? Was He



## The Vanity of Human Respects.

an *Enemy* to *Cæsar*, because *Gæsar's* Enemies affirm'd it? Or, Did He lay an *Horrid Plot* to subvert the *Government*, because the *Jews* laid this *Treason* at His Door? No, no; *CHRIST's* Enemy's *Crimes* and *Përjuries* could not blast His *Innocence*; nor could (yet) His *Church's* *Foes* ever black its *Reputation*, in the Opinion of Men, who are greater Friends to *Truth* than *Malice*; and who rather follow the *Light* of *Reason*, than the *Torrent* of *Faction*. Let Men call you then, *Superstitious*, *Cruel*, and *Idolatrous*, if you joyn your selves to *Our Church*; the *Sin* is *Theirs*; the *Vertue* of *Patience* Yours, if you bear the *Accusation* without any other Concern, than for your *Persecutor's* Sins. And I am sure, so great a *Blessing* ought infinitely to out-vy the greatest *Malediction*, which can flow from the most inveterate *Malice*.

This is true, *Sir*: But after all, the *World* will talk; nor will all the *Sincerity* of my *Intentions*, ever be able to perswade Men to put a favourable Construction on my *Proceeding*. *Spleen* will blaze it abroad, that *Interest* was the sole Motive of my *Conversion*, not *Conscience*; and that a *Criminal Compliance* with the *Times*, rather turn'd my *Will*, than *Reason* convinc'd my *Judgment*; and so  
I shall



## *The Vanity of Human Respects.* 13

I shall lose my *Honour*, and forfeit my *Reputation*, which is the greatest *Treasure* a Man of Quality can possess.

Pray, Dear *Christian*, give me leave to ask you this Question; *Can another Mans Wickedness warrant yours? Can a Fear of being thought a Bad Man, justify your being so?* The World will say, That *Interest* is your *Motive*; if it be, *Religion* is but a Cloak to cover your *Vice*; and you deserve more *Execrations*, than the *Tongues* of *Men* are able to fling on you: But if *Conscience* be the sole Ground of your *Conversion*, Will you be so unnatural as to pawn *This* on *Wicked Mens* Account? Will you be really a *Sinner*, out of a Fear of being esteem'd *One*? This is a *Folly* above Expression, and a Deference to an *Enemy*, which should never be granted the dearest *Friend*.

But you will hazard your *Honour*: What then? Good *GOD*! Shall I rather put to a venture the *Salvation* of my *Soul*, than my *Reputation*? Shall I be so enchanted with the vain *Applause* of *Men*, who cannot be sufficiently blam'd, as rather to fling up my Right to *Heaven*, than to forfeit a Place in their *Panegyrics*? O in what deceitful *Balances* do the unfortunate *Children* of *Adam* weigh Things! How fool-

## 14 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

ish is their *Conduct*, whose only *Ambition* is to be thought Wise!

Believe me, *Honour* will never save your *Souls*, (*Dear Christians!*) nor false *Aspirations* damn them: So that, in *Prudence*, you ought not to startle at *These*; nor to be so much enamour'd with *That*, as to give it a greater Place in your *Affections*, than your *Duty*. But, if you will be Slaves to *Honour*, let it be to *That*, which ennobles you; not to *That*, which disgraces you: Be *Great* in the Sight of *GOD*, not in the Opinion of *Men*; who are sure to esteem *That* most, which is of the least Value. The *Holy Fathers* tell us, 'Tis an *Honour* to Be a *Christian*; and, I am sure, 'tis a greater to be a *True One*; that is, not only to Profess *CHRIST*, but a *Religion* which hath its *Being* from his *Eternal Wisdom*, not from the *Aery Fancies* of Men.

Well, *Sir*, I am convinc'd, 'tis a Madness to be byas'd by any of these weak *Arguments*: But, *Times* may *Change*; and the *Religion* which is now Protected, may be Persecuted by an *Equal Authority*. *Times* may *Change*, 'tis true: But, let me tell you, Perchance, many here present, may be in their *Graves* before *Those Times* come. Shall I then assure my  
*Damnation,*

## *The Vanity of Human Respects.* 15

*Damnation*, out of the Apprehension of a *Danger*, that perhaps will never come near me? No, no: Seeing all my *Care* and *Industry* can never put my *Soul* in a perfect *Security*, whilst it moves in this *Region* of *Uncertainties*, I will place it as near *Heaven* as I am able; and never be frighted from so prudent a *Care*, by any future *Contingencies*.

But, suppose those *Times* were not only to *Come*, but *Present*; Can the *Sword* of *Persecution*, the *Rigor* of *Laws*, warrant any Man's *Disimulation*? Does *GOD* adapt his *Church* to the *Times*? Hath He Instituted One for a *Calm*, Another for a *Storm*? I confess ingenuously, I never saw, in all the *Monuments* of *Antiquity*, any Foot-steps of such an *Indulgence*. As *GOD* is without Change, so is his *Religion*; and we are oblig'd, under pain of *Damnation*, to embrace it, tho' it cost us the *Sweat* of our *Brows*, nay, and every *Drop* of *Blood* in our *Veins*.

This is *CHRIST*'s *Doctrine*; without any *Hyperbole*; If any Man come to Me, and hate not his *Father*, and *Mother*, and *Wife*, and *Children*, and *Brethren*, and *Sisters*, yea, and his own *Life* also, he cannot be My *Disciple*, Luke 14. 26. By which Words He declares, in the most positive Terms imaginable,  
That

## 16 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

That neither the Respect due to our *Parents*, neither the Love of *Wife* and *Children*; in fine, neither the natural and in-bred *Inclination* all Men feel to conserve their *Lives*, can warrant the Transgression of *GOD's Commands*: We must rather quit All we can hope for in this *World*, and expose us to All we can fear, than fall one Inch short of our *Duty*. And because it is not the *Least Command* (I am sure) to Embrace that *Faith*, which *CHRIST* hath Planted with His *Sweat*, and Watered with His most precious *Blood*, any Man's not Professing It will be punished with *Eternal Death*. *He that Believeth not, shall be Damned*, Mark 18. 16. The *Primitive Christians* were convinc'd of this *Truth*; and therefore no *Human Motive* was capable to with-draw them from *CHRIST*: These *Invincible Hero's* saw *Christianity* condemn'd by unjust Decrees of the *Roman Senate*; and more *Cruelties* put in Execution, than were Enacted: They beheld the *Reeking Gore* of their *Massacred Brethren*; were Spectators of their *Mangled Bodies*, which were either cast as a Prey to the *Beasts* of the *Field*, or *Birds* of the *Air*. As their *Divine Constancy* rais'd their *Souls* above the *World*, so the *Cruelty* of their *Persecutors* cast them lower than *Beasts*: The *Wounds* they receiv'd, the *Torments* they endur'd, so chang'd their *Features*, that nothing was



## *The Vanity of Human Respects.* 17

was more unlike *Men*, but the *Commentors*, whose *Barbarity* plung'd them into so deplorable a Condition. Yet *Death*, in all these ghastly Disguises, was not able to fright Young *Lords*, and Tender *Ladies* from the *Gospel*: They read *GOD's Commands*, and were resolv'd to comply with *Them*. They knew their *Souls* were at stake; and therefore, to secure These, they thought it no small Piece of *Wisdom*, to expose their *Bodies*, which once would fall a *Sacrifice* to *Death*, in spite of *Care* and *Artifice*: That the *Tyrant's Rage*, if vehement, would soon dispatch them; that, if remiss, it might be borne. So that what they could lose, was only what *Nature* once would steal.

But *Infidelity* open'd a far different *Scene*: It represented *Heaven* lost, *Hell* found, and Both for an *Eternity*. These *Motives* so softned all the dismal *Sequels* of a *Conversion* to *Christianity*, that they embrac'd it with *Joy*.

And therefore I do not see, why *We*, who expect from our Obedience to *CHRIST's Religion*, as great *Recompences* as *They*, and ought to fear as great *Punishments* from our *Infidelity*, should wander in a *Labyrinth* of *Irresolutions*; or rather should resolve to



## 18 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

be argu'd out of the **True Faith**, by such *Arguments* as weak *Children*; and feeble *Old Men* have solv'd by the Effusion of their *Blood*.

O GOD! Seeing therefore this is thy *Command*; I will seek the **Truth**, not as if I fear'd to find it; but like One, who knows he may be eternally Happy with it, and must be perpetually Miserable without it. I will lay down **Prejudice**, which is the worst of *Counsellors*, and only take **Sincerity** with me in the Pursuit: And, when once I am so fortunate as to find this *Treasure*, nothing but *Death* shall take it from me. I will not value the Reproaches of *Enemies*, nor the sawning Diffusions of *Friends*: I will sacrifice my *Honour* to my *Duty*; the *Portion* I possess in this *World*, (if need be) to that I pretend to in *Heaven*; and the Safety of my *Body*, to the Salvation of my *Soul*: Because, I am sure, if once I lose *This*, I shall never find *It*; but ever to deplore my Cruelty towards my *Self*, and my Ingratitude towards my *Maker*.

[I come

# The Vanity of Human Respects. 19

[ I come now to my Second Point. ]

ONE would wonder, how *Men*, who have *Courage* (in spight of *Railery* and *Shame*) to Embrace the *True Religion*, should be so *Cowardly*, as to fear to square their *Lives* according to its *Tenets*! Or, (what is yet more strange) how *Men*, who glory in the Name of a *Catholick*, should blush to be esteem'd a *GOOD ONE*! This is a *Conduct* no less preposterous, than for a Man to dare a *Gyant*, and to run from the Face of a *Pigmy*! Yet, is it not true in Practice? I wish it were not. But our *Eyes* must convince our *Judgments*, that too many *Tracts* of these unreasonable *Proceedings* are visible in the *World*. How many are there, perchance, in this very Place, who have committed more *Sins* to please a *Debauch'd Companion*, than to please *Themselves*? Who have more dreaded the Frown of a *Friend*, than the terrible Menaces of an angry *GOD*? You are Invited to a *Tavern*; You know the End of these *Invitations* are not to entertain *Friendship*, but to heighten *Intemperance*; not to divert *Nature*, but to drown both *Reason* and *Grace* in *Wine*. Your *Conscience* bids you stay: You hear its *Voice*; you feel its *Sting*; you resolve to *Obey*: But then *C*

## The Vanity of Human Respects:

lity changes your *Resolution*; You fear to be pointed at for a *Clown*, in case of a *Refusal*: And so, in fine, you Compliment your self out of *GOD's Holy Grace*, and accompany your *Friend* to *Hell*. You are appointed to meet a *Club* of *Desperado's* in such Places, as *Honesty*, nay, and common *Humanity*, scarce dares name: If a frequent Repetition of *Sins* have not quite lull'd your *Conscience* asleep, it cannot but startle at the bare making of so unchristian a *Proposal*. In the mean time, *Grace* and *Nature* wage a *War* within your *Breast*; you fear to Go, and are ashamed to Stay; you Tremble at an *Acceptation* of the *Challenge*; and Shiver as much at the very Thought of a *Refusal*. You see *GOD* threatening Above, *Hell* menacing Below; and you feel the *Pangs* and *Throws* of a *Conscience*, knowing within: But then a *Quid dicent homines?* (What will my *Companions* say?) drives away these wholesom *Admonitions*, to give place to the *Hellish Executioners* of *Sin*.

Your *Conscience* puts before your *Eyes* the dismal Scene of your *Crimes*; it echoes forth aloud, *Nisi Pœnitentiam egeritis simul omnes peribitis*; Either *Penance*, or *Damnation*: There is no *Medium* between these Extreams; no Place for *Neutrality*.

Consult

## The Vanity of Human Respects. 21

Consult then your own *Memory*, examine your *Duty*, and deplore first the Neglect of it; and then, *Vade & ostende te Sacerdoti*, Cast your self at a *Priest's* Feet, and lay There those *Monsters* of *Iniquity*, which otherwise will live Eternally to *Torment* you. A *Transcendent Shame* is far more easie to be borne, than a *Perpetual Punishment*; and a *Grief* with *Pardon*, is better than *Sorrow* with *Despair*.

These *Admonitions* soften our *Hearts*; we embrace the *Counsel*, and resolve to put it in Execution: But, in the mean time, an *Invitation* comes from a *Friend*, to some *Vain*, or perhaps *Criminal Divertisement*: Our *Pious Resolution* must give place to a *Ceremonious Condescension*, lest we commit a *Sælicism* against *Good Manners*, or disappoint a *Friend*. We run into *Treasons* against our *Souls*, we disappoint *GOD's* Fatherly *Designs*, and our own *Salvation*. Where is *Prudence*? Where is *Christianity*? nay, Where is even *Sense*, in this preposterous *Conduct*? For, I am sure, not one Grain of *Reason* is visible in it, from one End to the other. Suppose you should have the *Courage* to send back Word, That *Business* of the highest Concern, will not give you Leave to accept of the *Proposal*; That you intend to make *Even* past *Scores* with *GOD*, before you hazard your self.



## 22 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

to the *Danger* of encreasing Them. What can you apprehend? What? why a Thousand *Nick-Names* will be clapt on me, before I dream of it; of which *Bigot* and *hypocrite* are the least terrible. And yet, *GOD* knows, too many less fear open and real *Impiety*, than to be aspers'd with *Bigotry*, which carries nothing *Hideous*, but the *Name*; and had rather be *Real hypocrites*, than be deputed So.

Good *GOD*! That *Men* should thus run away from *Men*, and be skar'd at their own *Species*! What determines you, Oh miserable *Creature*, to a *Resolution*, which is so *Fatal* to your own *Soul*? *Fear*! What is it you fear? *My Companions*! Can all their *Malice* ever reach your *Soul*? *No*. Why then do you fear *That*, which is not worthy of the *Passion*? Because nothing is worthy of the least *Symptome* of *Fear*, but *That* which renders us unworthy of the *Character* of a *CHRISTIAN*. But they will defame me! How? *GOD* forbid; that in a *Christian Kingdom*, even *Heathenish Vices* should bear the Stamp of *Christian Vertues*! That *Catholics* should glory in *Impieties*, which *Pagans* were asham'd of! or run away from *Chastity*, as a *Crime*, which *Idolaters* themselves courted as a *Vertue*. Are *Christian's Laws* so vile, that we must be asham'd to keep them?



## The Vanity of Human Respects. 23

them? or, Is the *Contempt* of *Them* so dignifying, as to deserve a Place amongst our Titles of *Honour*? Is there no ways possible to be thought a *Gentleman*, unless our *Escutcheon* be fabled with *Ure*? O *GOD*! degrade me of *Nobility*, if I must purchase my *Arms* at so high a rate as *Heaven*! Level me with the poorest *Worm*, which creeps on the Face of the *Earth*, if you will but promise me afterwards a Place among the Happy *Troops* of thy *Elect*! I shall always esteem my self Higher with thy *Holy Grace*, in the Lowest Place that the Opinion of *Men* is able to cast me, than to move in the most *Sublime Sphere*, without it. Let *Men* call me *Clown*, and what they please; I value it not: If my *Rusticity* will once open *Heaven's Gate*, I shall be Happier than They, whose *Civility* will plunge them into *Misery*. O foolish *Man*! who rather chooseth to be a Well-bred *Gentleman* in *Hell*, than a Pious *Clown* in *Heaven*.

But pray, *Dear Auditory*, give me Leave to insist a little longer on this Subject. *Obloquy*, and the Fear of *Infamy*, frights you from your *Duty*: From whom do you fear these *Aspersions*? From whom the *Infamy*? From *Fools*, or *Wise Men*? That is, From the *Pious*, or the *Impious*? From the *Wise* you cannot: For, How can they condemn *Virtue* in You, which

## 24 *The Vanity of Human Respects.*

which They glory to *Practise* themselves? The *Fright* then comes from *Fools*; that is, from the *Impious*: Now, What *Man* of a sober *Judgment*, ought in *Prudence* to frame a worse *Opinion* of another, for being disprais'd by *Those* who deserve *Blame* themselves? Nay, I add yet farther, That all the *Satyrs* of the *Wicked*, are, in reality, the *Panegyricks* of the *Just*; and that they only black *Those*, whose *Tongues* are so black as to pronounce them. For, as it is the greatest Sign of a *Loyal Subject* to be rated at by a *Traitor*; so 'tis no less visible a *Mark* of a *Catholic's Piety*, than continually to lie under the *Censures* of the *Wicked*.

Wherefore, *Dear Christians*, I will End with the *Isa. 51. 7. Prophet's Exhortation: Nolite timere opprobrium hominum, & Blasphemias eorum nolite metueret*; Fear not the *Obloquies* of Men, and let not their *Blasphemies* alarm you: *Sicut enim vestimentum, sic comedet eos vermis*; Because they shall once fall a *Victim* to *Worms*: *Salus autem mea in sempiternum erit*; The *Time* will come, when they shall fall under the *Punishment* of their *Crimes*, and you shall flie up to the *Recompence* of your *Vertues*. You will then see, what a *Misery* it is to court *Vice*, what an *Happiness* to embrace *Vertue*. Cry then out with *St. Paul*;  
Non

## The Vanity of Human Respects. 25

*Non erubescō Evangelium*; I am not ashamed of the Go- *Rom. 1.*  
*spel.* Let the *World* Censure my *Change*, I will <sup>16.</sup>  
Approve *It*; and let them Laugh, I will Forgive  
them. *Maledicent illi & tu benedices*; And, as my *Psal. 108.*  
*Courage* hath carry'd me over all those *Earthly Mo-* <sup>28.</sup>  
*tives*, which would hinder my *Choice* of the *True*  
*Religion*; so, by *GOD's Grace*, shall my *Constan-*  
*cy* trample under Feet those *Human Respects*, which  
skare *Christians* from their *Duty*. I know, 'tis a  
Blessing to be a *Member* of the *True Church*; and  
that I draw down a *Curse*, if I am a *Bad One*: And  
therefore, I will not so misuse *GOD's Favours*, as to  
oblige Him to punish Me more than Others, because  
He hath loved Me more.

I do therefore now, in the Presence of *GOD*, and  
of His *Angels*, 'Retract my former *Weaknesses*; and  
do purpose never more to buy any *Man's Friendship*  
at so vast a Price, as *GOD's Displeasure*. No: My  
only Study shall be, to learn the *Obedience* I owe  
my *Maker*, and my only *Labour* to comply with it.  
This is the sole *Way*, which leads Me *Here* into  
*Content*; and will *Hereafter* place Me in that *Hap-*  
*py Region* Above, where I shall see my *Maker*, and  
feel my own *Felicity*.

*Deo Gratias.*